



Communications Director
Salary Range - \$56,613 – 102,020
Executive Service

About the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC)

The department is responsible for:

- safeguarding the health and safety of Tennessee citizens from environmental hazards;
- protecting and improving the quality of Tennessee's land, air, and water; and
- managing the system of 54 Tennessee State Parks and 83 Natural Areas.

TDEC has 2,900 employees working across Tennessee supported by a total budget of more than \$300 million with funding from dedicated fees and state parks revenue, federal grants, and state general fund appropriations. The department is the chief environmental and natural resource regulatory agency in Tennessee with delegated responsibility from the United States Environmental Protection Agency to regulate sources of air pollution, radiological health issues, solid and hazardous waste, underground storage tanks, water pollution, water supply, and groundwater pollution. TDEC has eight (8) regional offices across the state serving as the primary point of contact for their respective regions. The department offers a program of grants and loans to assist local communities with the development and maintenance of drinking water and wastewater infrastructure as well as solid waste disposal, waste prevention, plus programs for recycling and local parks. Particular emphasis is placed on front-end environmental education; strong, effective enforcement; and promoting sustainable practices by individuals, communities and organizations.

Objective of This Posting

We are seeking a hard working professional with a background in journalism, public or government relations, communications or similar to join a high-functioning, proactive team committed to providing timely, accurate information about the department to the public through the media.

Summary of Position

The Communications Director promotes transparency and exceptional customer service by ensuring effective communications with the public through the media. This position supports the department's education and outreach mission through effective media communications, crisis communications, message development and internal coordination. The department has a large volume of media inquiries. In addition to TDEC's Central Office, the department has eight environmental field offices and 54 state parks. The Communications Director is accountable for media communications statewide to ensure information is accurate, consistent and timely. The ability to provide complex information in an understandable manner is critical.

Principal Duties and Responsibilities

- Develops communications plan for the department and communications strategies for specific events and issues.

- Directs responses to media contacts, including proactive outreach, responses to questions and crisis communications involving local, state, national or international media.
- Develops messaging for departmental issues in conjunction with Commissioner's Office and coordinates with department staff to ensure department messages to media and other stakeholders are accurate, timely and consistent.
- Ensures Commissioner's Office and Governor's Communications Office are aware of emerging or potential media issues.
- Work with Assistant Commissioner for External Affairs to ensure department staff is effectively trained to respond to media inquiries.
- Looks for opportunities to use video (in coordination with the Director of Digital Media and Communications) to enhance department communications and media interactions.
- Produces weekly media report for internal use, and provides weekly reports to the Governor's Communications Director in coordination with Communications Officer.
- Coordinates and maintains Media Policy for department.
- Writes issues briefings, letters, speeches and other documents for the Commissioner's Office, as needed.
- Works in coordination with Communications Officer to ensure all external and internal deadlines are met.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

The successful candidate will have:

- Exceptional oral, written, and presentation skills and the ability to effectively and concisely translate complex environmental information to individuals at all levels and backgrounds
- Effective interpersonal skills dealing with people at various levels within the organization, as well as external stakeholders
- Integrity, a proactive approach, excellent judgment, a results-oriented and problem-solving mentality
- A commitment to the mission of the organization and dedication to providing exceptional customer service
- Proven leadership skills – able to influence and motivate others outside the chain of command to achieve quality results beneficial to the organization
- High energy capacity and bias for action
- Adaptability and resilience

Education / Experience:

Bachelors' degree with major in journalism, public relations, communications or government relations

5 years' experience in a related field

This is an executive service position. All interested candidates should submit a resume to Selena Cunningham, TDEC Director of Human Resources. The posting will remain open until the position is filled. Questions can be addressed to Selena Cunningham at (615) 532-0200 or Selena.Cunningham@tn.gov.

Selena Cunningham, Human Resources Director
Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation

L&C Tower, 12th Floor
401 Church Street
Nashville, TN 37243

TDEC is an AA/EEO/ADA employer. Women and minorities are encouraged to voluntarily identify themselves.